

B /201 cont./

*171 in remote epochs, /202/ for the phonetic softening processes
174 and the disappearance of the initial root-sounds, which are
241 present everywhere in the individual dialects, show a develop-
ment in the same direction, but in different gradations every-
where with respect to degree and limits, show only equivalence,
not conformity, and therefore could have started only after the
separation from the basic people. Nevertheless, even the basic
peoples have names for the most important useful plants; they
are entirely different from one basic people to another, but for
the individual basic stock they are common among a greater or
lesser number of branches. For the Karaiben /Carib/ I believe
I have proved these statements in my Bakairi grammar, I can
likewise maintain them for the Tupi after more recent studies;
for the Nu-Aruak /Arawak/, where the material is inadequate
and difficult, I reserve all judgment and merely point out that,
on the basis of historical and ethnological data, we must con-
clude that the Nu-Aruak undoubtedly have an older culture than
the Karaiben and certainly the Gês, and probably also an older
one than the Tupi. The Trumai borrowed their names for the
most important useful plants in part from the Nu-Aruak, in part
from the Tupi.

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Thus, we have a contradiction with respect to the common
conception: ancient agriculture along with the world view of
hunters. The Bakairi said to me: "Our grandfathers did not
know anything about maize and mandioca, instead they ate
earth" -- which the present-day Indians only nibble. In the
bagadú legend they say that mandioca was first given as a gift
to the campo residents. In the Mato Grosso different stages of de-
velopment are found side by side: in the case of the Bororo we
shall become acquainted with a mighty tribe for whom the culti-
vation of food plants was an incomprehensible beginning, who,
without need, most speedily pulled out and consumed the
mandioca roots planted for them, before the roots were scarcely
more than thin young shoots -- we recognize from the language and
also hear from the tradition that the Trumai were taught agri-
culture only recently by their neighbors, and we find among them
excellently tended, extensive plantings--

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/462 cont. /

115 School. Let us now pause at a peaceful scene. The Bororó
 [123] boys were my special friends. From them I learned the most
 [145] important elements of the language; they were extremely wide
 awake, pert, somewhat like little Niggerboys /given in English/,
 and in physical and mental agility decidedly ahead of our
 civilized European youth. They were extraordinarily pleased
 with their teacher-role and were constantly urging me to write
 things down: "poyédye papéra," roughly "again on the paper."



Fig. 128. Bororó youths.

115 I am indebted to them in particular for /463/ a knowledge of
 [193] the pronominal prefixes for the body parts, which are different
 for each person, and soon their favorite sport was to declaim
 in their language, "my nose, your nose, his nose, our nose,
 your nose, their nose" in all sorts of variations. The little
 115 scamp in the center in Figure 128 was especially intelligent.
 153 He was always hearing Bororó in our German. If the expression
 "papageienmässig" /Ger., "parrot-like"/ was used, there im-
 mediately came the exclamation: "papagafima" = "we are
 bathing." One evening when Ehrenreich was addressing the
 moon in the words of Doctor Faust and came to the passage,

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"in Deinem Thau gesund mich baden" /to bathe myself sound in your dew/, the little fellow immediately interrupted with "itáu! akáu, áu" = "my hair, your hair, his hair." This game was all the more original since the cadet Caldas, their schoolmaster, who was also supposed to be working on the Bororó language, pronounced the American pronominal prefixes which I was seeking to be silly humbug and an invention of the boys, on the order of chicken talk. And he stuck to it, because he was very stubborn in his views. He was also very scornful of our opinion that Latin is a dead language, for he said it is spoken in Egypt. But what was even worse, he maintained that "Müller" -- heaven knows where he got his knowledge of his only German word -- was a French word and insisted on it, despite the amusing despair of Ehrenreich, who, as a native Spree-Athenian /a Berliner/, was shaken to the depths of his thinking and feeling in the face of such an unheard-of attack on the Berlin address-book.

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If Caldas, who received an extra allowance for the instruction of the Bororó boys, did not learn much from his pupils, they probably learned even less from him. It is true, the rogues came unwillingly; in the beginning they did not come at all and were persuaded to do so only when a few inquisitive fathers sat with them in the school. The way in which the recalcitrant ones were assembled in the morning reminded one vividly of the game "bringing the little pig into the pen." Moreover, they were extremely inattentive. I must admit, however, that the method could not have been more peculiar. I thought the children would first of all learn the Portuguese names for the most familiar things, useful plants, animals, implements, which would certainly have pleased them, because they asked about them spontaneously. I also thought, if they absolutely had to learn to read -- but it really does not matter what I thought, and it is better to limit oneself to the report.

Each of the boys had in his hand a sheet of paper that Caldas had written on. Thereupon we read -- not they, of course -- al, el, il, ol, ul, bal, bel, bil, bol, bul, dal, del, dil, dol, dul, etc. over the entire page. The teacher read them one line